

Amendments To the Abstract:

In the English translation document, please add the section heading at page 14 line 1, as follows:

--ABSTRACT--

In the English translation document, please add the paragraph at page 14 line 1, after the newly added ABSTRACT section heading, as follows:

In order to determine a cause of a reduced performance of service in a communications network, information that describes network elements, which are relevant to the provision of a service, with regard to their functional properties and their topological arrangement is stored in a network element database and is assigned to the service. In addition, service availability and/or service quality for a selected service are tested at preset times. A service affected by a reduced performance of service is determined based on a result of this testing. Network elements relevant to the provision of the service, which is affected by the reduced performance of service, are determined based on the information stored in the network element database. The determined network elements are tested in order to determine a cause of the reduced performance of service.